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Robinson, R.; Hermans, C.; Scheepers, P.; Schilderman, J.

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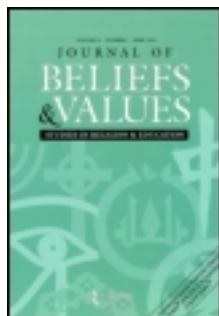
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Coming together: transcendent and immanent notions about the origin of relationships

Remco Robinson ^a, Chris A.M. Hermans ^a, Peer L.H. Scheepers ^b & Johannes B.A.M. Schilderman ^a

^a Department of Empirical Theology and Empirical Study of Religion, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

^b Department of Social Science Research Methodology, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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Coming together: transcendent and immanent notions about the origin of relationships

Remco Robinson^{a*}, Chris A.M. Hermans^a, Peer L.H. Scheepers^b and Johannes B.A.M. Schilderman^a

^a*Department of Empirical Theology and Empirical Study of Religion, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands;* ^b*Department of Social Science Research Methodology, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

According to Charles Taylor, secularisation makes belief in God one option among others, providing people with an immanent frame in which they can understand their lives. In this contribution we explore notions about the origin of bridal couples' relationships from the angle of participants in church marriage rituals. Following Taylor and adopting the time and memory philosophy of Halbwachs and Assman, we come to a conception of temporal perspective that consists of two dimensions: a transcendental and an immanent perspective on the past. Our analyses show that the participants indeed make distinctions between a transcendental and immanent perspective on the origin of the relationship and that almost everyone agrees with the immanent perspective but only one third with the transcendent. Their agreement is mostly influenced by religious beliefs and their conceptions of marriage.

Keywords: immanent frame; church wedding; communicative and cultural memory

1. Introduction and research issue

Many authors have already contributed to theories about secularisation, e.g. Berger (1967), Bruce (2002), de Graaf and Grotenhuis (2003, 1999), Grotenhuis (1999) and Dobbelaere (2002). For them secularisation involved disenchantment of people's worldview and the disappearance of religion in the public domain. Taylor (2007) adds a third sense of secularisation, involving the conditions of belief. What has fundamentally changed in modern society is that not believing in God has become a real option for everyone. For Taylor, both believers and unbelievers have a perspective of fullness on life. For people who believe in God, this perspective of fullness is related to the transcendent. Non-believers also have a perspective of fullness but this fullness remains within this world, hence it is an immanent perspective, an immanent frame (2007, 1–3). Key features of this immanent frame are interiorisation, an opposition between mind and world, in which thoughts, feelings and purposes are only attributed to minds; the existence of meta-empirical agents is denied. In addition, the intentional depth is sought within the mind. Taylor speaks of a 'buffered, disciplined self, which also sees him/herself more and more as an individual' (2007, 540). This buffered, disciplined and individual self is not necessarily less religious. It can go together with a drive for a new form of religious life, more personal, committed and devoted but less centred on a collective.

*Corresponding author. Email: r.robinson@rs.ru.nl

As said above, for Taylor, the emergence of an immanent frame does not mean that every reference to the transcendent is lost. It is possible for the immanent frame to remain open, because even within the immanent frame people make 'strong evaluations', experiencing the (moral) higher. Whenever this higher is linked to God or the transcendent, the immanent frame is open. In an open frame, the transcendent can break through the immanent. This can be called festive. It takes us out of the everyday life (2007, 544–46). Still, the immanent frame can be closed, locking people up in secular time, which is an instrumentalised time, in which only the materialistic, empirical reality can be accepted. Believing anything out of this order is rejected, seen as immoral, not belonging to an adult worldview (2007, 546–48).

In this contribution, we wish to assess Taylor's theory about the immanent frame in a case study about the church wedding ritual. In many wedding ceremonies, whether civil or ecclesial, a lot of attention is given to the past of the bridal couple; how they grew up and how they got to know each other. This attention stems from the structure of rituals that accompany pivotal moments in people's lives, such as baptism, marriage, and burial. These occasions are experienced as merging with the great mystery of life (Lukken 1999, 262). In ritual studies they are considered to be rites of passage (Gennep 1909; Turner 1969). At pivotal moments such as the marriage ritual, people in a sense reconstruct their lives. From that decisive vantage point they review their past. This occurs within the ritual. The origin of the relationship is sought in the couple's past. But the couple's lives are not reconstructed in a personal, immanent perspective only. The origin is also viewed in a transcendent perspective.

According to Taylor, the transcendent perspective can break through everyday life, especially during feasts. However, this is only possible if the immanent frame is open. Michels (2004, 196–201) describes how marriage rituals tend to be personalised, focussing on the immanent perspective on the couple's lives and leaving less space for the transcendent perspective; in other words, closing the immanent frame. When couples ask for such a ritual, to what extent do they still adopt a transcendent perspective on the origin of their relationship? Because of the secularisation, we expect fewer participants to have a religious background and to have an open immanent frame.

There is though also a possibility that religious socialisation influences people's notions about the origin of the couple's relationship indirectly. The influence would not emanate from their religious socialisation generally, but more specifically from her or his conception of marriage. Although people's notions about marriage were strongly determined by Christianity in Western Europe, it is questionable whether this is still the case because of the individualisation and secularisation. That is why we need to determine in how far religious socialisation as such determines notions about that origin of the relationship, or people's conceptions of marriage specifically.

These questions are approached from the angle of participants in the marriage ritual, both bridal couples and wedding guests. Although the ritual role of the bridal couple differs from that of the wedding guests, we interpret both groups as participants of the ritual. In this study, we confine ourselves to Roman Catholic marriage rituals. The foregoing problems crystallise in the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent do participants in church marriage rituals distinguish between a transcendent and an immanent conception of the origin of the couple's relationship?
- (2) To what extent do participants in church marriage rituals agree with these conceptions of the origin of the couple's relationship?

- (3) To what extent do different conceptions of the origin and destiny of the relationship correlate with differences in religious socialisation?
- (4) To what extent are these correlations explicable in terms of conceptions of marriage?

In the next section we discuss various views of the origin of the couple's relationship on the basis of Halbwachs' and Assmann's theories of collective memory. Section 3 describes the new measuring instrument we devised for these views, and in the next section we deal with the results of the measurement and analysis. The final section presents some tentative conclusions based on our answers to the research questions and certain issues for further discussion and research.

2. Theories and hypotheses

In the previous section we broke up our research problem into four research questions. In this section we present our conceptualisation of the origin of the couple's relationship, which distinguishes between an immanent and a transcendent temporal perspective. We then formulate our expectations about the influence of religious socialisation and of conceptions of marriage on the two temporal perspectives respectively.

2.1 *Communicative and cultural memory generally*

We have said that a marriage ceremony represents a pivotal moment in a person's life. It is at such moments that people take a look at their lives. The ordinary course of day-to-day life breaks down and time assumes a different aspect. Memory plays a major role in all this. Memory is not just individual but also collective. The reason why certain details are remembered and others are not is that the individual whose memory it is belongs to a social group, a collective. The collective provides the person with a frame of reference for reconstructing her memories. It entails certain points of reference that are shared and discussed by the collective. Because individuals belong to various collectives, their recollections of the same event differ. Unlike historiography, memory is manifold (Assmann 1992, 42–45; Halbwachs and Elchardus 1991, 7–9, 13–15, 17–34).

Collective memory can assume various forms. We distinguish between two of these. The first is communicative memory. It comprises the group's collective experience; hence it dates back at most 80 to 100 years. It is based entirely on oral transmission and represents an everyday perspective on time. Then there is cultural memory, which focuses on certain fixed points in history that determine the group's collective identity. It includes not only historical moments but myths and legends as well. The two forms of memory are transmitted in different ways. Communicative memory is handed down to a greater or lesser extent by all group members, mainly orally. Cultural memory is transmitted officially in special forms and sign systems. This gives them a sacred character and they impart – mostly transcendent – meaning. All group members share their communicative memory. This does not apply to cultural memory. There are special occasions for sharing cultural memory (Assmann 1992, 50–53). A major medium is feasts. They could be calendar or seasonal feasts like Christmas and Easter, but also feasts to mark special occasions in a person's life. A church wedding clearly falls in the second category.

Feasts are relevant to the way the two forms of memory coexist. In day-to-day living people operate in ordinary time. Daily life is subject to chance; it is contingent. On the whole life is organised functionally. In the affluent Western world transcendent meaning hardly features in everyday life. Finally, a lot of daily life is spent on automatic actions and habits that are quite banal, in the sense that they have no deeper meaning and are not pondered in any depth. The temporal perspective of such mundane things is that of communicative memory. The things people do show strong continuity with what people have always done. Ordinary life is governed by what group members still remember and tell each other. But feasts cut across everyday life. In contrast to the contingency of ordinary life, feasts are orchestrated: most feasts proceed according to a more or less rigid score or script. Actions are governed by a fixed structure according to criteria other than functionality, such as aesthetics. In contrast to the lack of meaningfulness of everyday life, feasts abound in meaning. They can trigger reflection but also euphoria, breaking down the restraint and reserve of ordinary life. Finally, feasts are also marked by repetition, but not that of mindless, banal routine. Actions have deeper meaning than just the self-evident (Assmann and Sundermeier 1991, 14–17).

Inasmuch as feasts cut across everyday reality, cultural memory will supersede communicative memory not unlike the way Taylor described how the immanent frame could remain open. He also uses the term ‘festivity’. The myths, rituals and symbols that belong to the cultural memory and are now centre stage, give the world new meaning that extends beyond the age of the present generation. The collective from which the individual derives her identity is extended to a broader community dating back to (primordial) beginnings. Myths, rites, and symbols effect some sort of renewal of collective identity with its concomitant meaning and group cohesion (Assmann and Sundermeier 1991, 23–24).

2.2 *Communicative and cultural memory in church marriage rituals*

So far we have dealt with the distinction between communicative and cultural memory and images of the future generally and their interplay during feasts. We shall now apply it concretely to church marriage rituals. Through their images and metaphors rituals evoke notions about the origin of the relationship. Liturgical language (words, gestures, objects) does something to people. It functions as symbolic language that links humans with God’s grace, and only to a lesser extent as descriptive language, an exposition of what is happening (Chauvet 2001, 83–101).

In the case of church marriage rituals we find, as noted already, a sharper focus on communicative memory. Their lives before they met each other are reviewed, how they came to know each other and reached a decision to get married (Michels 2004; Scheer 1979).

If we examine the variants of church marriage rituals discussed and prescribed in the literature, we find that the ordinary temporal perspective is augmented with a different one that accords with cultural memory. In that perspective the origin is Christian salvation history, the history of the God of Israel and Jesus of Nazareth, a God who concerned himself with his people since creation and was incarnated as a human being in Jesus of Nazareth. That salvation history was recorded in the Bible as well as in other Christian texts. It still makes itself felt in the present and must/can influence the lives of Christians, who conduct themselves as children of God and disciples of Jesus. Just as cultural memory cuts across communicative memory during feasts, so

liturgical services generally are marked by a different temporal perspective. It entails remembering what God has meant to the human race in the past (anamnesis), seeks to effect a re-enactment and actualisation of that salvation history in the ritual (Thurian 1963, 29–35). Church marriage rituals locate the origin of marriage in God's creation of man and woman as helpmeets for each other (Gn 2:18–25; Mt 19:3–12; Mk 10:1–12; Lk 16:18).

In church marriage rituals these biblical meanings of marriage are applied to the couple. The texts are read, reverberate in the hymns and the sermon, and recur in specific liturgical texts like the addresses of the officiant and the nuptial blessing. The marriage of the couple here and now is assimilated into the series of biblical and Christian marriages in the past and thus acquires historical meaning.

Just as two temporal perspectives converge in feasts generally in the form of communicative and cultural memory, so the past of the couple's relationship is viewed both immanently and transcendently in church marriage rituals. Accordingly we approach ritual participants' notions about the origin of the couple's relationship in terms of two dimensions:

- (1) transcendent origin: the couple's relationship originates from the fact that God created man and woman for each other; and
- (2) immanent origin: the couple's relationship originates from the fact that bride and groom met each other and together built up their relationship.

2.3 Religious socialisation

On the basis of Halbwachs's and Assmann's work we have identified two dimensions of notions about the origin of the couple's relationship. As noted in section 1, the emergence of the immanent frame and the personalisation of the church marriage rituals result in greater concern with immanent views of the origin of their relationship at the expense of transcendent views. In addition, secularisation has meant that the average church involvement of bridal couples has declined and the majority of wedding guests, being the other participants in the ritual, are ecclesiastically uninvolved. Hence we must consider how open they will be to transcendent notions about the origin of the couple's relationship. We expect the degree of openness to the transcendent view to relate closely to the religious socialisation of participants in church marriage rituals. Not only do we expect ecclesiastically involved couples to be more receptive to images and metaphors of marriage from Christian tradition. We expect the same of ecclesiastically involved participants as a whole. That is essential for mythical time to irrupt in ordinary time, as Assmann would have it. In other words, because, as noted already, liturgical symbols influence people's ideas, we expect them to agree more strongly with the transcendent view of the origin of the relationship.

There are several ways to study people's religious socialisation. One of these is to study the influence of socialising actors. People encounter various socialising actors in the course of their lives. Here we confine ourselves to religious socialisation by parents, the socialising community to which the participants belong, and those to which their partners (where applicable) belong.¹ Three aspects of the respondent's and his or her partner's socialising community are pertinent: the respondent's church membership, integration with the religious community in the form of participation in religious life, and integration in the form of the strength of the respondent's faith. Indicators of integration in the form of participation in religious life are frequency of

church attendance, church involvement, and importance attached to participation in transitional church rituals. Indicators of integration in the form of strength of belief are religious salience (the importance of religion in the respondent's life) and the respondent's certainty of the existence of God or an ultimate reality. We expect people who are strongly religiously socialised to agree more with the transcendent view of the origin of the couple's relationship. Such strong agreement does not, however, imply less agreement with the immanent view.

2.4 Conceptions of marriage

In our fourth research question, we also refer to the influence of conceptions of marriage. It is beyond the scope of our contribution to discuss our conceptualisation of marriage. We discern four conceptions of marriage: contract, having children, premarital sex, and love. The concept of contract has five dimensions, an ecclesial, religious, personal, judicial, and social one. We also included alternative forms of cohabitation. The concept of having children is conceptualised as being a God given task or a social expectation. Sexuality we conceptualised as objections to or acceptance of premarital and extramarital sex, and to male and female homosexuality. Love we conceptualised as self-effacing, erotic, reciprocal, and caring love. We expect people who attach more value to marrying before the church and before God, who believe that they have a God given task to have children and who set store with self-effacing² love, to agree more strongly that the couple's relationship has a transcendent origin. On the other hand, we expect people who attach more value to marrying before the civil magistrate, before each other or their social environment, who believe that their social environment expects them to have children and who attach more value to erotic, reciprocal, and caring love, to agree more strongly that the couple's relationship has an immanent origin.

3. Data and measurement instruments

In this section we describe our sample taken in 2005 and the measurement instrument created to assess our research questions. We confine ourselves to the description of the measurement instrument used to measure the extent of agreement with the transcendent and immanent notion about the origin of the relationship of the bridal couple, because the description of the other measurement instruments would be beyond the scope of this article.

3.1 Data collection

To answer our research questions we used the data we collected from January to June 2005. From the total number of Roman Catholic parishes in the Netherlands we drew a random sample of 150 parishes. The pastors or pastoral volunteers involved in marriage services in these parishes were requested to ask prospective bridal couples to take part in the study. A maximum of three couples per parish participated. Shortly after the wedding they completed a questionnaire, in which they supplied the particulars of six guests. Because we wanted a sufficient number of respondents who were not church members, three of the six guests had to have been, or planned to get, married in the church, and three of them people who did not have or want a church marriage. These six people were also asked to complete a questionnaire.³ Thus the

population from which we drew our sample consisted of participants in Catholic marriage rituals, and our findings can be generalised to that population.

Not all parishes had weddings in the research period. Especially (according to the pastors) aging parishes had no weddings at all. In the end we had a list of 131 bridal couples and 169 of their guests. Of the 300 questionnaires circulated 216 were completed and returned (71%). Of these 161 were from couples (74%) and 55 from wedding guests (25%). Among the respondents 162 (75%) were church members: 151 Roman Catholics (70%) and 11 members of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (5%). Fifty-four respondents were not church members (25%).⁴

3.2 Measuring instrument

We measured notions about the origin of the relationship by presenting respondents with a questionnaire comprised of a closed question and sixteen items. The question reads: *When two people get married one often thinks about the origin of their relationship. Thinking back on the wedding ceremony, could you indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements?* The eight items are based on the conceptualisation described in section 2 and respondents had to indicate how much they agreed with each.⁵ The items are presented in the factor analysis (Table 1.)

Table 1. Factor analysis of notions about the relationship's origin and destiny.

Items	Theoretical domain	Communality	Transcendent origin	Immanent origin
The bond between the couple originates in the fact that God destined man and woman for each other	Transcendent origin	.86	.93	
The origin of the marriage bond lies in the fact that God created man and woman for each other	Transcendent origin	.85	.92	
The origin of the marriage bond lies in the fact that God made man and woman for each other	Transcendent origin	.83	.91	
The creation of man and woman is the origin of the bond between the bridal couple	Transcendent origin	.63	.79	
The relationship that grew between the partners is the basis of their marriage bond	Immanent origin	.66		.81
The marriage of bride and groom is grounded in the bond that formed between them	Immanent origin	.65		.80
The relationship that grew between the partners is the basis of their marriage bond	Immanent origin	.37		.61
The marriage bond between bride and groom is the relationship that grew between them	Immanent origin	.29		.59
Cronbach's alpha			.93	.77

4. Results

The previous section shows our data collection and the measuring instrument, based on our conceptualisation in the previous section. In this section we will present the results of our data collection and analysis. First we describe to what extent our conceptualisation is reflected in the participants' answers to our questionnaire. Then, we report to what extent the participants agree with the notions about the origin of the couple's relationship. We also present two regression analyses that show the influence of religious socialisation and conceptions about marriages on the transcendental and immanent origin of the bridal couple's relationship.

4.1 Dimensions

In section 2 we described two notions about the origin of the couple's relationship. But are these two notions also discernible in the minds of participants in marriage rituals? To answer this question we conducted a factor analysis. Below we indicate the dimensions we identified theoretically for each item (theoretical domain) and which factors we found in the respondents' answers, together with the communality coefficients and factor loadings.⁶

Factor analysis⁷ of items in the scale for the origin of the relationship yields two factors, the items loading exactly as we had anticipated theoretically. Hence the analysis confirms our theoretical distinctions, and we can label the factors in accordance with the dimensions that we discerned.

Our research question concerns the extent to which participants in church marriage rituals distinguish between a transcendent and an immanent perspective on the origin of the couple's relationship. Our factor analysis permits the conclusion that they do make such a distinction.

4.2 Agreement

On the basis of the factor analysis we constructed scales.⁸ The frequency distribution of the scores on each scale appears below. We used the scores on these scales to answer our second research question.

Table 2 shows that respondents' views on the transcendent origin of the couple's relationship are very divided. About a third of them reject the notion; another third neither agree nor disagree; one third subscribe to it.

Table 2. Agreement with transcendent origin.

Label	Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Disagree totally	1	14	6.5	6.5
Disagree	2	62	28.7	35.2
Neither agree nor disagree	3	62	28.7	63.9
Agree	4	69	31.9	95.8
Totally agree	5	9	4.2	100.0
Total		216	100	

Table 3. Agreement with immanent origin.

Label	Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Disagree totally	1	0	0	0
Disagree	2	0	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	3	4	1.9	1.9
Agree	4	97	44.9	46.8
Totally agree	5	115	53.2	100.0
Total		216	100.0	

Nobody rejects the notion that the origin of the couple's relationship is the relationship they have built up. A mere 1.9% neither agrees nor disagrees. The immanent origin of the relationship is accepted almost unanimously (98.1%).

4.3 Regression analysis

To answer our second research question about the influence of religious socialisation and conceptions of marriage on the participants' notions about the origin of the bridal couple's relationship, we use regression models. We use four models for religious socialisation by parents, integration with the religious community via participation in religious life, integration through strength of belief, and conceptions of marriage. We apply the models to the dependent variables the transcendental and immanent origin of the relationship of the bridal couple.

Transcendent origin

In Table 4, the third regression coefficient of model 1 ($-.94$) confirms our expectation that people from homes where both parents are members of a church or religious community will agree more strongly with the view that the couple's relationship has a transcendent origin than those from homes where neither parent is a member. This coefficient is significant. We also anticipated that integration via participation in church life has a greater impact on respondents' notions about the transcendent origin of the marriage ritual than religious socialisation by parents. This was confirmed. The significant difference between respondents from homes where both parents are members of a church or religious community and those from homes where neither parent is a member becomes non-significant. Among attributes of participation, frequency of the respondent's church attendance and importance attached to participation in ecclesiastic transitional rituals have a significant effect (respectively .22 and .21). Yet both effects are explained when strength of the respondent's belief is incorporated into the analysis (model 3). Among strength of belief as a form of integration only certainty of belief in God has a significant effect (.36), which remains significant when conceptions of marriage are included in the analysis (model 4). Among conceptions of marriage, the notion that couples primarily marry before God and the one that homosexuality by nature is unacceptable have a significant effect (respectively .30 and $-.20$). The latter is remarkable. The less unacceptable homosexuality by nature, the stronger is the agreement that the couple's relationship has a transcendent origin.

Table 4. Parameter estimates for regression analysis of transcendent origin.

Models	1	2	3	4
Church membership parents:				
both parents	.00	.00	.00	.00
one parent	.04	.15	.22	.20
neither parent	-.94	-.30	-.16	-.29
Frequency church attendance		.22	.22	.06
Church membership respondent:				
member		.00	.00	.00
non-member		.08	-.04	.15
Church membership partner:				
member		.00	.00	.00
non-member		-.15	.03	-.02
Intentional participation transitional rituals		.21	.10	.01
Religious salience			.12	.08
Belief in God			.36	.32
Belief in ultimate reality			-.04	-.01
Contract:				
Religious-ecclesiastic				.30
Personal				.04
Social				-.06
Exclusively judicial				.10
Alternative forms of cohabitation				-.04
Having children:				
Religious task				.03
Social expectation				.05
Premarital sex				.07
Homosexuality by nature				-.20
Homosexual behaviour				.02
Love:				
<i>Self-efficacing love</i>				-.04
<i>Erotic love</i>				-.00
<i>Reciprocal</i>				-.06
<i>Caring love</i>				.14
R-square	.11	.22	.32	.43
Adjusted R-square	.10	.20	.28	.34

Note: *p*-values .05 in bold, *n* = 173

One would have expected an opposite effect, since a transcendent origin of the relationship refers to the fact that man and woman were created for each other. Possibly this is explicable if one assumes that the acceptability of homosexuality by nature does not mean acceptance of homosexual marriages. It does not imply acceptance of their behaviour either. In addition the negative correlation between agreement with unacceptability and transcendent origin (i.e. the greater the acceptability of homosexuality by nature, the stronger the agreement with the transcendent origin of the couple's relationship) is hard to explain. If we take account of the explained

Table 5. Parameter estimates for the regression analysis of immanent origin.

Models	1	2	3	4
Church membership parents:				
both parents	.00	.00	.00	.00
one parent	-.34	-.42	-.43	-.31
neither parent	.03	.12	.08	.09
Frequency church attendance		-.21	-.18	-.15
Church membership respondent:				
member		.00	.00	.00
non-member		-.06	-.05	-.33
Church membership partner				
member		.00	.00	.00
non-member		-.18	-.22	-.12
Intentional participation		.08	.15	.04
transitional rituals				
Religious salience			-.02	.05
Belief in God			-.26	-.14
Belief in ultimate reality			.14	.05
Contract:				
Religious/ecclesiastic				-.03
Personal				.32
Social				.09
Exclusively judicial				-.08
Alternative forms of cohabitation				.08
Having children:				
Religious task				.05
Social expectation				.16
Premarital sex				.19
Homosexuality by nature				.10
Homosexual behaviour				-.07
Love:				
<i>Self-efficacing love</i>				-.21
<i>Erotic love</i>				-.01
<i>Reciprocal love</i>				-.07
<i>Caring love</i>				.14
R-square	.03	.08	.34	.43
Adjusted R-square	.02	.04	.23	.34

Note: *p*-values .05 in bold, *n* = 173

variance, we see a gradual increase of explained variance. In total religious socialisation explains 28% of the variance. From this we conclude that religious socialisation explains considerably the measure of agreement with the transcendent origin of the couple's relationship. The answer to our fourth research question is that conceptions of marriage explain the influence of religiosity, particularly of belief in God, to a minor extent only. The influence of belief in God still remains significant.

Immanent origin

Our first model shows a significant *negative* difference between respondents from homes where both parents are members of a church or religious community and those from homes where only one parent is a member (–.34). Religious socialisation by parents influences agreement with an immanent origin of the couple's relationship positively. We did not expect this. If we incorporate the predictors of integration with the religious community through participation in religious life (model 2), the difference remains significant, even increases (–.42). Of these predictors frequency of church attendance has a negative effect (–.21). In the third model both influences remain significant (respectively –.43 and –.18). Inclusion of the predictors of strength of the respondent's belief does not explain the influence of parents' church membership and frequency of respondent's church attendance, although certainty of belief in God has a significant negative impact (–.26). When conceptions of marriage are included in the fourth model, the negative influence of parental church membership remains significant (–.31), but the effect of frequency of church attendance is no longer significant. The predictors of conceptions of marriage have a suppressor effect (Davis 1985; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2001) on respondent's church membership, resulting in a negative significant difference between respondents who are church members and those who are not (–.33). The latter agree less with the notion of an immanent origin. The significant effect of certainty of belief in God is explained and no longer significant. Among conceptions of marriage the following views have significant positive effects: marriage takes place primarily before the other partner (.32); the social environment expects the couple to try to have children (.16); and premarital sex is acceptable (.19). The notion that self-effacing love is important in marriage has a significant negative effect (.21). People who strongly endorse self-effacing love agree less with immanent origin.

Religious socialisation by parents decisively influences agreement with an immanent origin of the relationship. Those from homes where only one parent is a church member agree less with immanent origin than those from homes where both parents are members. This could be because consideration of the biographical origin of the relationship occurs in the course of the liturgical service as a whole, so that it becomes to some extent a religious act, even though essentially it is purely immanent. Of the predictors of participation in religious life, church attendance has a significant, negative effect. Although we did not expect religious socialised participants to disagree with the immanent perspective, this negative influence does seem to point to this conclusion. This would contradict the finding that participants with parents who are church members agree more with the immanent perspective. Both models only explain 2% en 8% of the variance, so we should not pay too much attention to these findings. Although the predictors of strength of belief in model 3 do not have a decisive impact or explain the impact of the other predictors, it does increase explained variance from .04 to .23. The answer to our third research question is that the measure of agreement by participants in church marriage rituals with the notion that the couple's relationship has an immanent origin is fairly explicable in terms of their religious socialisation.

Conceptions of marriage do not explain the influence of parental socialisation, but they do explain the effect of participation in religious life and strength of belief. However, they have a suppressor effect, as a result of which the influence of the respondent's church membership becomes decisive. These predictors moreover increase explained variance to 34% and there are many decisive effects.

The fact that the notion that marriage is primarily a matter between the two partners, the social expectation that they should try to have children, and that premarital sex is acceptable have a clear positive influence, is understandable, since they belong to the immanent frame and are non-transcendent, nonreligious and mostly non-ecclesiastic. The negative effect of self-effacing love is understandable, since this form of love is strongly associated with the Christian faith, hence conducive to agreement with a transcendent origin.⁹ We can answer our fourth research question as follows: predictors of conceptions of marriage partly explain the influence of religious socialisation on participants' agreement with an immanent origin of the couple's relationship considerably, although the influence of parental religious socialisation remains partially unexplained.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In this contribution we departed from Taylor's third sense of secularisation and the immanent frame in which modern society lives. We questioned Taylor's theory that this immanent frame can remain open for transcendent notions and perspectives with regard to the church marriage ritual. Using Halbwachs' and Assman's concepts of communicative and cultural memory, we studied the extent to which participants of church marriage rituals distinguished between a transcendent and immanent perspective on the origin of the marital couple's relationship. Our factor analysis shows that respondents indeed distinguish these two perspectives. About one third of the participants agree with the transcendent perspective, whereas the immanent perspective is agreed with almost unanimously. Religious socialisation influences the agreement with both notions. Although the influence on the transcendent perspective is built up gradually by parental socialisation, integration as participation in religious life and by integration as sharing in religious beliefs, the influence of parental socialisation and participation in religious life on the agreement with the immanent perspective is far more limited; sharing religious beliefs account for far more agreement. Conceptions of marriage explain a part of the influence of religious socialisation on both perspectives. The influence of sharing in religious beliefs and the parental religious socialisation remain unexplained for the transcendent and immanent perspective respectively.

5.1 Discussion

Our findings clearly support Taylor's theory that we live in an immanent frame. Virtually all of the participants agreed with the immanent perspective, whereas only a third of them agreed with the transcendent perspective. Furthermore, this has clearly to do with secularisation, in the sense that religious socialisation had a strong influence on these notions. People who believe in God indeed agree more with the transcendent perspective. This is reflected in their conceptions of marriage, at least when it comes to the question, who marries the couple. For these people it is God and the church who are the primary marital agents. Furthermore, having immanent conceptions of marriage affects the agreement with the immanent perspective strongly, although there remains the influence of parental religious socialisation.

The fact that respondents who agree with the transcendent perspective, also agree with the immanent one, indicates the importance of combining both perspectives within the church marriage ritual. None of the respondents are expected to live in a purely transcendent frame, which perhaps is entirely impossible. Because the open

immanent frame enables the transcendent perspective to break through the immanent perspective, it is crucial both these rituals to include both perspectives. Leaving either one out impoverishes the ritual seriously. This concurs with Chauvet's view of the effect of sacraments, conceived of as symbols. Sacraments join (Greek: *sumballein*) Christ to the church or, more broadly, God with humankind, and within the church they join people together as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. The individual life story is connected to the wider story if the Christian religion (Chauvet 2001, 17, 85–89)

An important issue for future research is to gain more insight into the transcendentally meaningful element of the ritual and how that element should determine ritual practice; in other words, if the ritual should combine both a transcendent and immanent perspective, how can both perspectives be integrated in one ritual form?

Notes on contributors

Remco Robinson is a researcher within the Department of Empirical Practical Theology and Empirical Study of Religion at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Chris A.M. Hermans, is Professor of Empirical Practical Theology and Empirical Study of Religion at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Peer L.H. Scheepers is Professor of Methodology of the Social Sciences at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Johannes B.A.M. Schilderman is Professor of Religion and Care at the Department of Empirical Practical Theology and Empirical Study of Religion at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Notes

1. Durkheim conceives of religious socialisation as a linear process. This notion of socialisation has come under fire and it now tends to be interpreted as an interactive process (Bouw and Kruithof 1993; Hurrelmann 1986).
2. In Christianity *agapè*, self-effacing love, has always been emphasised.
3. Because ours is what is known as a stratified sample, we conducted a variance analysis of notions about the origin of the bridal couples' relationship before we proceeded with the other analyses. In this prior analysis we compared the variance of individual respondents with that of respondents grouped according to a specific wedding, with a view to possible clustering of wedding guests with the bridal couple concerned. At a significance level of 5% the difference between the two variances was significant. At a significance level of 1% it no longer was.
4. Since we interpret the church wedding ritual from the perspective of collective memory, we do not differentiate between the notions of bridal couples and their wedding guests. Because only 25% of the wedding guests returned their questionnaire, we performed an analysis of variance to see whether wedding guests would significantly agree differently with the notions about the origin of the bridal couples' relationship. At a significance level of 5% the difference between the two variances was significant for immanent origin. However, the variance is theoretically irrelevant, since the respondents' answers only vary between agree and totally agree (see Table 3). This variance is irrelevant for our further analyses. In addition, at a significance level of 1% the variance no longer was significant.
5. Scores range from 1 to 5, 1 representing 'totally disagree' and 5 'agree totally'.
6. Factor loadings below .20 are omitted.
7. Paf, no rotation, minimal eigen value 1.

8. Scale scores are calculated by summing respondents' scores on the items for each factor and dividing the total by the number of valid scores.
9. Although this correlation is not strong enough to have a positive effect on transcendent origin of the relationship (see Table 5).

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